

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## FEDERAL EMPLOYEE TAX ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2012*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, once again the House finds itself considering a bill that unfairly targets the hard working public servants who every day are providing a wide array of public services from helping to nurse our wounded veterans, to discovering cures and treatments for diseases that plague millions of American families, to ensuring aviation safety, to protecting our borders, public safety and the food supply. Over the last two years, our Republican colleagues have repeatedly brought legislation to the floor to slash the pay and benefits of civil servants in order to protect special tax breaks for the super wealthy and special interests.

Obviously, all Americans should pay their taxes, and those who fail to do so should be penalized. But federal employees should not be denied the full complement of due process rights that are available to any other American. This bill would result in the firing of federal employees who may be legitimately contesting a tax liability through the established process. Moreover, by linking the firing of a federal employee to a lien, this bill would result in the firing of individuals who are already in the process of satisfying their tax obligation. There are already laws and regulations on the books that address how tax debt should be handled and how federal employees who are delinquent on their payments should be disciplined.

In 2002, the IRS asked Congress to change the standard for determining when an agency was mandated to fire employees. Rather than firing every employee who fails to properly file their tax return, IRS created a hierarchy of penalties based on the seriousness and willfulness of the offense. This bill throws out that process and treats all delinquencies as if they were willful and deliberate.

Comparatively, federal employees have a compliance rate that is higher than the average American taxpayer. In 2010, 3.35 percent of federal employees were delinquent in their tax payments. That same year, the delinquency rate for the total universe of American taxpayers was 7.4 percent. Instead of making public servants the target of new, unnecessary and unfair legislation, we should instead be focusing on uniform ways to strengthen and better enforce existing laws and regulations governing tax delinquency.

## HONORING METRO CHICAGO

**HON. MIKE QUIGLEY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, thirty years ago, in August of 1982, a little-known band from Georgia took the stage at a new music venue at 3730 North Clark Street in Chicago.

Five hundred tickets were sold for 5 dollars each, and Chicagoans gathered in "the big room" to watch R.E.M.

The show was a huge success, and the Metro Chicago has been an influential music venue ever since.

Celebrating their 30th anniversary this month, the Metro continues to hold an important place in the Chicago music and performing arts scene.

There is a long list of memorable moments, including performances by music legends like James Brown, Bob Dylan, the Ramones, Smashing Pumpkins, and my personal favorite, Poi Dog Pondering.

The Metro has always been a venue that has provided a platform for new music talent to start their careers the old fashioned way, by sending in a demo and booking a slot.

Their dedication to independent music comes from the enthusiasm of owner Joe Shanahan, a south side Chicago native.

In the late 1970s, looking to better connect the music community of his home town, Joe started hosting parties for performing artists out of his loft apartment in the city.

It was not long until his musical gatherings outgrew his small space.

He eventually converted an old community center into a venue, and he has been bringing Chicago the best local and national talent ever since.

Shanahan, an icon in independent music promotion, stays involved in the community as well by serving on the boards of the Chicago Children's Choir and Rock for Kids, a charity that provides music education to underserved children in Chicago.

Without a doubt, the Metro and Shanahan's influence on the Chicago music scene is beyond measure.

Music before money always has been the message, and because of this commitment, the Metro has helped shape Chicago's cultural landscape.

For 30 years the Metro has contributed to the music scene in Chicago, and for 30 years fans have flocked to it.

Congratulations on three decades of rock.

We'll be lining up for thirty more years of great music to come.

## RESOLUTION OF DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT CYPRUS

**HON. VIRGINIA FOXX**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, there is a need to respond to recent comments that have been made by some of my colleagues involving issues of concern to Cyprus.

We all agree that a comprehensive and sustainable resolution of disagreements about Cyprus is long overdue. Such a solution must allow both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to participate in all aspects of the island's national life and government while respecting the rights and political equality of all Cypriots preserved in a renewed partnership state.

Of concern to me are statements by some that Turkish Cypriots, and the Republic of Turkey itself, are obstacles to any forward progress.

Without rehashing the history that brought about the current situation on Cyprus, it should be made clear that the Turkish government has, on multiple occasions, welcomed the resolution of these issues which guarantees the equal rights of the Turkish Cypriot community. Turkish Cypriots voted overwhelmingly in favor of the U.N. Comprehensive Peace Plan (known as Annan Plan) in 2004, demonstrating their sincere desire to move beyond the painful past. Despite this genuine determination to incorporate, not only within the life of the island, but within the wider European and global communities, the U.N. proposal was overwhelmingly rejected by the Greek Cypriot side. Incredibly, one week after missing one of the most significant opportunities to reach a comprehensive solution to these longstanding problems, the Greek Cypriots were awarded with membership in the European Union.

As a result, the Greek Cypriot community, as the Republic of Cyprus, now enjoys full membership status in the European Union including all associated rights and privileges as well as membership in the wider, global community. It is time to end the isolation and embargoes imposed upon the Turkish Cypriot community and secure a negotiated political settlement, agreed to by both parties, that allows all Cypriots to build a common future together.

## RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF DEVEREUX

**HON. JIM GERLACH**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Devereux on its upcoming 100-year anniversary.

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